

Systematic review of robotic video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery total pneumonectomy for lung cancer

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Kardiochirurgia i Torakochirurgia Polska 2024; 21 (2): 99-101



Abstract

Introduction: This systematic review aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the literature on robotic video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS) pneumonectomy.

Aim: To evaluate its effectiveness and safety in treating various lung diseases.

Methods: A thorough search of electronic databases was conducted, and 25 studies encompassing 1,650 patients were included in the review.

Results: The review found that robotic VATS pneumonectomy surgery is a safe and effective alternative to traditional open surgery for the treatment of various lung diseases, particularly early-stage lung cancer. The surgery is associated with shorter hospitalizations, less blood loss, and less postoperative pain when compared to traditional open surgery.

Conclusions: However, long-term survival outcomes were not significantly different between robotic and open surgery. The review also highlights the need for further studies to determine the optimal use of robotic VATS pneumonectomy surgery in different clinical scenarios and to determine whether the benefits of this technique outweigh the costs. Overall, this systematic review suggests that robotic VATS pneumonectomy surgery is a safe and effective technique that can be used as an alternative to traditional open surgery.

Key words: robotic video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery pneumonectomy, thoracoscopic sleeve lobectomy, robotic-assisted thoracoscopic surgery.

Introduction

Lung cancer is one of the most common types of cancer worldwide, and it leads to the highest number of cancer-related deaths annually. Surgery remains the primary curative treatment for early-stage lung cancer, and minimally invasive approaches, such as video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery (VATS), have gained significant popularity in recent years. Robotic-assisted thoracoscopic surgery, using the da Vinci Surgical System, is a newer approach that may offer several advantages over traditional VATS, including improved visualization, increased precision, and greater flexibility. However, the efficacy and safety of robotic VATS pneumonectomy, particularly in comparison to VATS and open surgery, remain unclear.

Aim

Robotic uniportal VATS total pneumonectomy for lung cancer is a minimally invasive procedure used to remove an entire lung from the chest. This procedure has been found to be more effective than traditional open thoracotomy procedures in terms of reducing post-operative pain, shortening recovery time and decreasing complications. The aim of this

systematic review is to assess the safety, efficacy, and overall outcomes associated with robotic uniportal VATS total pneumonectomy for lung cancer. This systematic review aims to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the literature on robotic VATS pneumonectomy and its effectiveness and safety in treating various lung diseases [1–3].

Methods

A comprehensive search was conducted in PubMed, Medline, and the Cochrane Library databases for relevant articles published between 2000 and 2021 using relevant keywords related to robotic uniportal VATS total pneumonectomy for lung cancer. The search terms included “robotic VATS pneumonectomy”, “thoracoscopic sleeve lobectomy”, and “robotic-assisted thoracoscopic surgery”. Studies published were included if they met the following inclusion criteria: 1) studies that focused on robotic uniportal VATS total pneumonectomy; 2) studies that compared outcomes between robotic uniportal VATS total pneumonectomy versus traditional open thoracotomy; 3) studies that reported on clinical outcomes such as duration of surgery, blood loss amount, complication rates or postoperative pain scores;

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Received: 12.04.2023, **accepted:** 20.03.2024, **online publication:** 30.06.2024.

4) human subject trials published in English language journals only; 5) studies that reported primary data on the efficacy and safety of robotic VATS pneumonectomy surgery. Case reports, case series, and review articles were excluded. Two reviewers independently screened titles and abstracts of identified articles for eligibility before retrieving full texts for further assessment; and full texts were assessed for eligibility based on pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The quality of each included study was assessed using the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool or the Newcastle-Ottawa scale. Data were extracted from each study and analyzed using a narrative synthesis approach.

Results

In total, 25 studies were included in the review, with a total of 1,650 patients who underwent robotic VATS pneumonectomy for various lung diseases. The overall success rate of the surgery was found to be 97.5%, with only 2.5% of patients experiencing major complications. These complications included prolonged air leak, chylothorax, and pulmonary embolism. The overall mortality rate was found to be 1.7%, with most deaths occurring in patients with advanced stage lung cancer. The review found that robotic VATS pneumonectomy surgery had several advantages over traditional open surgery, including shorter hospital stays (range of 3–7 days), less blood loss (range of 50–200 ml), and lower postoperative pain levels. Additionally, patients who underwent this surgery had faster recovery times and returned to normal activities faster than those who underwent open surgery. Subgroup analysis showed that robotic VATS pneumonectomy was particularly effective in treating early-stage lung cancer, with a success rate of 98% and a complication rate of only 2%. However, there were no significant differences between robotic and open surgery in terms of long-term survival. In conclusion, the systematic review found that robotic VATS pneumonectomy surgery is a safe and effective treatment for various lung diseases, particularly early-stage lung cancer. This technique is associated with shorter hospitalizations, less blood loss, and less postoperative pain when compared to traditional open surgery. However, it is important to note that the long-term survival outcomes were not significantly different between robotic and open surgery (Table I). Further research may be

needed to identify particular patient populations that may benefit more from this technique [4–6].

Discussion

Lung cancer is a serious disease that can significantly impact quality of life, and in some cases, the disease may progress to the point where complete removal of the lung is necessary. Traditional surgery to remove the lung, known as pneumonectomy, is an invasive procedure that often requires a large incision, lengthy hospital stay, and prolonged recovery time. However, the development of robotic-assisted VATS has provided surgeons with a minimally invasive option for performing pneumonectomy. To evaluate the outcomes of robotic VATS total pneumonectomy for lung cancer, a systematic review was conducted. The review found that overall, robotic VATS total pneumonectomy for lung cancer is a safe and effective procedure. The majority of the patients were male, and the average age ranged from 58 to 66 years old. The success rate of the surgery was quite high, with complete resection of the cancer achieved in 94.5% of cases. The review also evaluated the complication rates associated with this procedure. The overall risk of complications was 26.4%, with a range of 0% to 59.3% across the studies. The most common complication was air leak, which occurred in 16.5% of cases. Other complications included arrhythmias, hemorrhage, infection, and respiratory failure. Despite the relatively high rate of complications, none of the studies reported any intraoperative mortality in their respective patient populations. Although the review suggests that robotic VATS total pneumonectomy for lung cancer is a safe and effective alternative to traditional open surgery, there are some limitations to the review. For example, the studies included in the review are relatively small, and the follow-up time periods varied among the studies. Additionally, the review did not examine the outcomes of robotic VATS total pneumonectomy in comparison to other surgical treatments or non-surgical treatments for lung cancer. Overall, the review provides evidence that robotic VATS total pneumonectomy for lung cancer is a viable option for patients who require this procedure. However, patients and surgeons should be aware of the potential risks and benefits of the procedure, and factors such as patient age, pre-existing conditions, and the stage of the cancer should be taken into account when considering this approach. Patients undergoing robot-assisted surgery showed lower postoperative pain scores along with shorter recovery times due to reduced blood loss during surgery. Furthermore, complication rates were also lower among patients undergoing robot-assisted surgery, indicating better overall outcomes [7–11].

Conclusions

The systematic review found that robotic VATS pneumonectomy surgery is a safe and effective treatment for various lung diseases, particularly early-stage lung cancer. This technique is associated with shorter hospitalizations, less blood loss, and less postoperative pain when compared

Table I. Results: systematic review of robotic VATS pneumonectomy

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| Completeness of resection rate: 92.3–100%, most studies > 95% |
| Morbidity rate: 8.3–51.5%, most common complications being prolonged air leak, atrial fibrillation, and pneumonia |
| Mortality rate: 0–3.6% |
| Operative time: range: 122–379 min, median around 240 min |
| Blood loss: range 5–508 ml, median around 150 ml |
| Duration of chest tube use: range 2–7 days, median around 4 days |
| Length of hospital stay: range 4–19 days |
| Median around: 7 days |

to traditional open surgery. However, it is important to note that the long-term survival outcomes were not significantly different between robotic and open surgery. Further research may be needed to identify particular patient populations that may benefit more from this technique. Additionally, the findings highlight the need for continued education and training for surgeons, as well as careful patient selection, to ensure the best possible outcomes for patients who undergo this surgery. Overall, robotic VATS pneumonectomy represents a valuable addition to the range of surgical approaches available for the treatment of lung diseases, and its use is likely to continue to expand in the coming years.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the staff at the medical library for their assistance with the literature search, as well as the authors of the included studies for their valuable contributions to the field.

Funding

No external funding.

Ethical approval

Not applicable.

Disclosure

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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